United Nations ECE/CTCS/2018/10

Economic and Social Council

Distr.: General
20 February 2018

Original: English

Economic Commission for Europe

Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards

Fourth session
Geneva, 3-4 May 2018
Item 6 (b) of the provisional agenda
Capacity-building and technical assistance activities

Report on capacity-building and technical assistance activities

Submitted by the Secretariat

Summary

This document provides an overview of capacity-building and technical assistance activities carried out under the UNECE sub programme on trade during the period April 2017 – March 2018. It includes activities carried by Working Party on Regulatory Cooperation and Standardization Policies (WP.6); Working Party on Agricultural Quality Standards (WP.7); the United Nations Centre for Trade Facilitation and Electronic Business (UN/CEFACT) and the Regional Adviser.

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This report is presented to the Steering Committee on Trade Capacity and Standards for decision.

GE.18-02602(E)

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I. Introduction

1. The ECE Trade Sub-programme supports trade and economic cooperation among ECE Member States and facilitates their integration into global value chains, drawing on the work of its intergovernmental bodies and expert groups. The sub-programme contributes to ensuring:

(a) A predictable, transparent and harmonized regulatory environment for commerce and business through strengthening of the convergence of regulations, as well as through the promotion of international standards and best practices in areas of regulatory cooperation, conformity assessment and market surveillance;

(b) Sustainable trade in agricultural produce, integration into international supply chains and food loss reduction through the development of agricultural quality standards and related international best practice for implementation and use by regulatory authorities as well as the private sector;

(c) Simple, transparent and effective processes for global commerce through the development and maintenance of international trade facilitation instruments including global standards and best practices for moving from paper-based to automated electronic environments and for the harmonization and simplification of the business processes underpinning export and import activities.

2. Technical assistance and capacity building activities are demand-driven and delivered in close cooperation with development partners. The activities aim at supporting ECE Member States, especially less economically developed and landlocked countries, in their efforts to implement ECE trade-related standards, recommendations and best practice guides. Activities also seek to support the removal of regulatory and procedural barriers to trade caused by capacity shortfalls and differences in administrative procedures, regulations and standardization policies.

3. The next section provides an overview of the Trade sub programme's capacity building and technical assistance activities for the period April 2017 – March 2018, highlighting the main objectives, achieved results, and development partners. Section three lists the activities carried out by the Trade Sub-programme's Regional Adviser.

II. Capacity building activities for the period April 2017 – March 2018

No.	Title, Date, Venue	Objectives	Results	Partners
1.	Strengthening the national capacity of trade-support institutions of Kyrgyzstan (1 July 2016-30 June 2018)	To develop training materials for trade support institutions and familiarize traders and government officials with international and national trade-related regulations, policies, trends and issues.	Developed and translated into Russian training content on supply chain management; single window implementation and facilitation of imports and exports procedures; and, risk management in regulatory frameworks conformity assessment and market surveillance. First series of training workshops will be carried out in (Kyrgyzstan) in March 2018.	Government of Kyrgyzstan
2.	Supporting the Removal of Regulatory and Procedural Barriers to Trade in the Republic of Tajikistan (capacity building project, 1 October 2017-31 September 2018)	To assist Tajikistan in establishing a National Trade Facilitation Committee (NTFC) in line with the recommendations emerging from the ECE study on regulatory and procedural barriers to trade and, thereof, enable the Government to fulfil its commitments under the Agreement on Trade Facilitation (ATF).	Organized a national "kick-off" workshop to identify the national training needs of NTFC and launch the project (February 2018).	Government of Tajikistan, International Trade Centre (ITC) and United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD).
3.	Conference on Standards for the Sustainable Development Goals (28-29 November 2017)	To raise awareness about the contribution of standards to achieving the 2030 agenda, the challenges to realizing the potential of standardization, and the role of governments therein.	Showcased examples of how standards are used by Member States in pursuing the 2030 Development Agenda	International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC), International Organization for Standardization (ISO), International Social and Environmental Accreditation and Labelling (ISEAL) Alliance, Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining, Global Reporting Initiative (GRI), UNCTAD, World Wildlife Fund (WWF).

No.	Title, Venue, Dates	Objectives	Results	Partners
3.	Economic Implications of Non-Tariff Measures (NTMs), 10-11 April 2017, Geneva, Switzerland. Organized jointly with UNCTAD as part of the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) funded project (10th tranche 2016-2019) Strengthening the national capacities of selected UNECE countries for evidence-based regulatory and procedural trade policies to achieve SDGs	Familiarize experts from line Ministries and national research institutions with main approaches to: (i) identifying the key characteristics of NTMs, their prevalence and impact on trade flows; (ii) evaluating the accuracy of studies, which use econometric tools for quantifying the impact of NTMs on trade flows; and, (iii) factoring NTM considerations into national development strategies	The theoretical and practical underpinnings of such approaches were shared. A final report , synthesizing the proceedings of the workshop was published at: http://www.unece.org/index.php?id=45622	UNCTAD
4.	Strengthening the capacity of Central Asian countries to implement trade facilitation measures (Capacity building project, 1 January 2018-31 December 2019)	To strengthen national capacities of the beneficiary countries to implement trade facilitation measures and better integrate into the international rules-based trading system.	Training materials and modules for national TF courses are being developed, covering relevant target areas for implementing WTO ATF Articles 10.1 on formalities and documentary requirements; 10.3 on use of international standards; 10.4 on single window; and 23.2 on national trade facilitation committee (NTFCs).	
5.	Workshop on Sustainable Cross-border Trade of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables (22 - 24 March 2017), Thessaloniki, Greece jointly organized with the Government of Greece. Carried out as part of UNDA funded project, 9th tranche (2014-2017) Strengthening the	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The workshop featured a special focus on women and their role in agricultural production, trade and inspection (mainly female audience); and on the implementation of UCE standards, export and import inspection methods, food safety, quality assurance and marketing issues in the Balkan region. It brought together all Balkan countries as well as Greece. In addition to demand -driven theoretical and practical training, the workshop involved a study tour to the port of Thessaloniki – the largest sea port in the region- and a packing	Government of Greece

	capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains		house. The workshop also presented the case of Greece where, owing to an ECE (European Union-EU) funded project that was implemented several years back, agricultural exports increased and efficiency in production, certification and inspection improved.	
6	Workshop on Sustainable Cross-border Trade of Fresh Fruit and Vegetables: Quality—Food Safety—Sustainability, 10-13 July 2017, Tashkent, Uzbekistan jointly organized with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and supported by Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) Uzbekistan. Carried out as part of United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project 9th tranche (2014-2017) Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The workshop focused on fresh fruit and vegetables, with a view to raising awareness and fostering adoption of ECE standards, export and import inspection methods, food safety and quality assurance in the region. Following the adoption by two Central Asian countries of several ECE standards and their cooperation on dried apricots, joint training and production pooling to increase export opportunities for the whole region, particularly the Fergana Valley, the focus on fresh fruit and vegetables was requested by the countries of the region. The workshop contributed to UNDP and GIZ field projects and involved field visits to orchards and packing facilities (with on-site training). The workshop speeded up the adoption of ECE standards, with Uzbekistan adopting 80 ECE standards by the end of 2017. The ad-hoc regional working group expanded to become more standing in nature and to include public and the private sectors in Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan. The training material on the ECE standard for dried apricots was finalized with the support of donor agencies active in Tajikistan (including Hilfswerk Austria) and their funds from the EU. It was translated into Tajik, Kyrgyz and Uzbek languages. Further two requests for workshops were received in early 2018 from authorities and UNDP. ECE coordinates all its activities through the UN country teams, UNDP and donor agencies active in the	UNDP, GIZ, Hilfswerk Austria

			region to maximize impact and sustainability of achieved results.	
7.	Workshop on Sustainable Meat Markets, Cross-border Trade and Eating Quality, 10 - 11 August 2017, Dublin, Ireland jointly organized with Government of Ireland's Agriculture and Food Development Authority (Teagasc). Carried out as part of United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project, 9th tranche (2014-2017) Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade	The workshop trained in practical and theoretical sessions participants in quality production and standards for international meat trade particularly, the ECE standards. It also provided training on the development and structuring of meat markets, eating quality, beef and lamb carcass grading to underpin consumer satisfaction and the implementation of ECE standards. Because of this workshop, the Central Asian participants under the project managed to increase their understanding and the practical application of standards, internationally traded cuts, traceability and meat trade.	UNDP, GIZ, Hilfswerk Austria, IIC Government of Ireland's Agriculture and Food Development Authority (Teagasc)
8.	Cross-regional (international) Workshop on Cross-Border Trade of Meat and Electronic Certification (19 - 21 September 2017), Nanjing, Tianjin, China organized with ESCAP and supported by Nanjing Agricultural University and Tianjin AQSIQ and the ports of Tianjin. Carried out as	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade	The focus of the workshops was on international meat trade and related electronic certification. Participants included experts from the ECE region as well the ESCAP region. It combined both parts of the UNDA 9th tranche project in theoretical and practical sessions as well as study tours. As a result of this workshop, participants from both regions exchanged their experiences and views on ECE's and ESCAP's role in international trade of meat. They also gained insight into research, production, food safety issues and sales as well as developing and using electronic	ESCAP, Nanjing Agricultural University AQSIQ Tianjin

No.	Title, Dates, Venue	Objectives	Results	Donors
	the last workshop under the United Nations Development Account (UNDA) project, 9th tranche (2014-2017) Strengthening the capacity of transition and developing economies to participate in cross-border agricultural food supply chains		certification and inspection procedures to further facilitate trade and traceability (meat).	
9.	Workshops on the development of standards for meat, fresh and dried produce. May, June and November 2017, Geneva, Switzerland. Carried out as part of UNDA project, 9th tranche (2014-2017)	To strengthen national capacities for using international best practices, tools and instruments as well as developing integrated strategies for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade.	The workshops were organized as part of regular WP.7 sessions, and resulted in increased understanding amongst participants from the Balkan and the Central Asian regions of the development and implementation of international best practices for facilitating cross-border agri-food trade and in some cases the adoption of international best practice and standards as first steps towards increased agricultural trade.	GIZ, Hilfswerk Austria, UNDP

III. Regional Adviser's capacity building and technical assistance activities during the period April 2017 – March 2018

No.	Three/Four-Year Plan	Objectives	Results	Partners
1.	Three advisory services to the Government and Interagency Working Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics of Ukraine	Support the Interagency Working Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics of Ukraine Endorse the results and follow-up to the Single Window and Data Harmonization seminar, held in Irpen, Oct. 2016; discuss follow-up with agencies and partners Build up on the results of assessment of Ukraine's readiness to implement the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement and help the Ukrainian Government prepare the B and C category categorization and notification to the WTO Secretariat. Provide advisory support to the national Single Window team on data harmonization and alignment to international standards	Recommendations of the October 2016 seminar on Single Window (SW) and Data Harmonization endorsed, and decision of further activities made for submission to the Council of Ministers of Ukraine. Request endorsed to help Ukraine's Government prepare a project on data harmonization (for support by, among others, EU and EUBAM) Support provided to the Government to prepare notifications for category B and C measures in the WTO ATF. Capacity to establish and manage National Trade facilitation (TF) Committees built. Report on the achievements of the PCS project in Odessa and its replication for the further development of a national SW in Ukraine, and for data harmonization, aligned with the EU Single Window. Proposal for new focus of cooperation in 2018, notably on data harmonization for the national SW project in Ukraine and for e-corridor projects.	Government of Ukraine (Ministries of Economic Development and Trade, Infrastructure, and others, Customs), the business community, Interagency Working Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics, European Commission, EUBAM, CUDP, etc.
2.	7th UCC seminar in Odessa on trade facilitation and the Single Window, 1 June 2017, on agricultural trade procedures simplification, WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement Impact on Agri-food Trade, and a peer review of the	As a result of the capacity-building: (i) included tools for the automation of agricultural certificates (including UNECE/FAO tools) in the work on the national Single Window in Ukraine; (ii) explored expansion of the work of the Odessa port community system to agri-food trade; (iii) contributed to the regional capacity-building	(i) Training and background material on the development of a national Single Window, electronic agricultural certificates, and data harmonization prepared and sent to the SW team in Ukraine; (ii) Port Community System explores possibilities for covering further modes of exports and imports of agricultural goods, and; (iii) successful training on trade facilitation	Interagency Working Group on Trade Facilitation and Logistics of Ukraine, WTO, FAO, various government agencies

No.	Title / Date / Venue	Objectives	Outputs	Partners
	Odessa port community system.	on trade facilitation in the agricultural supply chains in Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia	in the agricultural supply chain for the Regional Workshop on the WTO ATF impact on agri-food trade. Materials published on: http://unece.plaske.net and http://www.unece.org	
3.	Three advisory services to the EU Task Force on Single Window Legal Issues	Provide advice to the EU Task Force on Single Window Legal Issues on the new UN/CEFACT and ECE instruments on SW definition (white paper) and SW interoperability (draft Recommendation 36)	ECE standards and Single Window recommendations adopted in the work of the Task Force, notably the new white paper on SW definition and Rec. 36 on SW Interoperability (notably, interoperability within the EU and between the EU and its trading partners)	European Commission DG TAXUD, governments of the EU MSs.
4.	Assessment of the readiness of Azerbaijan to implement the WTO TFA (28.3-15.10.2017).	Provide WTO ATF readiness assessment to the Government of Azerbaijan for supporting its WTO accession negotiations. Build capacity of the national consultant to carry out a survey and a study of the readiness and capacity of the stakeholder agencies to understand the measures in the Agreement.	Azerbaijan's WTO ATF readiness assessment completed. National consultant and representatives of various stakeholder agencies substantially improved their understanding of the measures in the TFA. Recommendations for the Government for the next phase of WTO accession negotiations.	Government of Azerbaijan (Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Economic Cooperation), UNCTAD, GIZ, and other partners.
5.	High-level seminar and Working Group (WG) meeting at the WTO Headquarters on 10 July 2017.	Consider the specificities of the SPEC A region and its trade development needs; discuss measuring progress in implementing the SDGs; and further develop a regional ET strategy.	The WG on Trade identified a list of principles for steering trade development and sustainable development. A regular biannual stocktaking of progress made in achieving SDG target 17.10 (promotion of the international rules-based trading system under the WTO) and SDG target 17.11 (increasing the share of developing countries in global exports – notably with data on the SPEC A countries) took place. Regional SPEC A trade facilitation strategy further developed.	
6.	Joint ECE - Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) seminar on Single Window	To adopt recommendations on the next steps for supporting SW interoperability in the BSEC region. To support the finalization of the regional	Seminar on Single Window and SW interoperability successfully organized. BSEC Member States initiated work to	BSEC Permanent Secretariat, EU Commission, and BSEC Member States.

	interoperability (20-22 September 2017)	BSEC Trade Facilitation Strategy; and; (iii) promote the implementation of National Single Window and Port Community Systems in the BSEC region.	support of SW interoperability in the region. The text of the regional BSEC Trade Facilitation Strategy was prepared to support BSEC discussions.	
7.	Workshop on Transport- and Trade-related SDGs, Podgorica, Montenegro, 11-12 October 2017	Strengthen understanding of the transport- and trade-related SDGs among policy-makers and experts in the Western Balkan countries; promote UN Conventions, rules, standards and practices that foster the parallel advance of transport, trade and sustainable development; identify focal points for SDGs cooperation in invited countries; and liaise with the UN Office in Montenegro on these issues.	Recommendations from the Workshop were adopted. UCC Secretariat delivered comprehensive guidance on how to collect relevant statistics to monitor and report on SDGs achievement. Background paper (to support the development policy documents in the region) prepared and discussed.	Governments of Montenegro and the other Western Balkan countries, UNDP Montenegro
8.	2017 SPECA Economic Forum on Innovation for the SDGs in the UN Special Programme for the Economies of Central Asia (SPECA) Region (including innovative trade facilitation tools) and 12th session of the SPECA Governing Council	Support the development and adoption of recommendations from the Forum and decisions of the Governing Council session, develop the SPECA Work Plan for 2018-2019 and prepare SPECA countries to chair the Programme in the future; and, discuss SPECA evaluation report and preparations for a review of SPECA at the 20th anniversary session of the governing bodies in 2018.	The Economic Forum on Innovation for the SDGs in the SPECA region successfully carried out; plan made to draft a regional innovation strategy. 12th session of the Governing Council successfully carried out and decisions adopted on all items. All SPECA countries, experts from SPECA and other countries, representatives of international and regional organizations, business and academia took part in the events. SPECA Evaluation Report reviewed. Position of SPECA as a platform to support regional cooperation for the implementation of the SDGs strengthened. Countries lined up to chair SPECA: Kazakhstan in 2018, Turkmenistan in 2019, and Kyrgyzstan in 2020.	Ministry of the Economy, Tajikistan; UNDP Tajikistan; ESCAP
9.	Finalization of the capacity building project (upgrading the technical equipment at	The delivery of the Shushari seed potato laboratory.	Detailed inventory was carried out along with a two-day practical training for the laboratory staff.	Leningrad Oblast Branch of the Federal State Institution "Russian Agricultural

No.	Title, Venue, Dates	Objectives	Results	Contacts
	the Shushari potato seed laboratory), St. Petersburg, Russian Federation, 22-26 January 2018.			Centre"

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